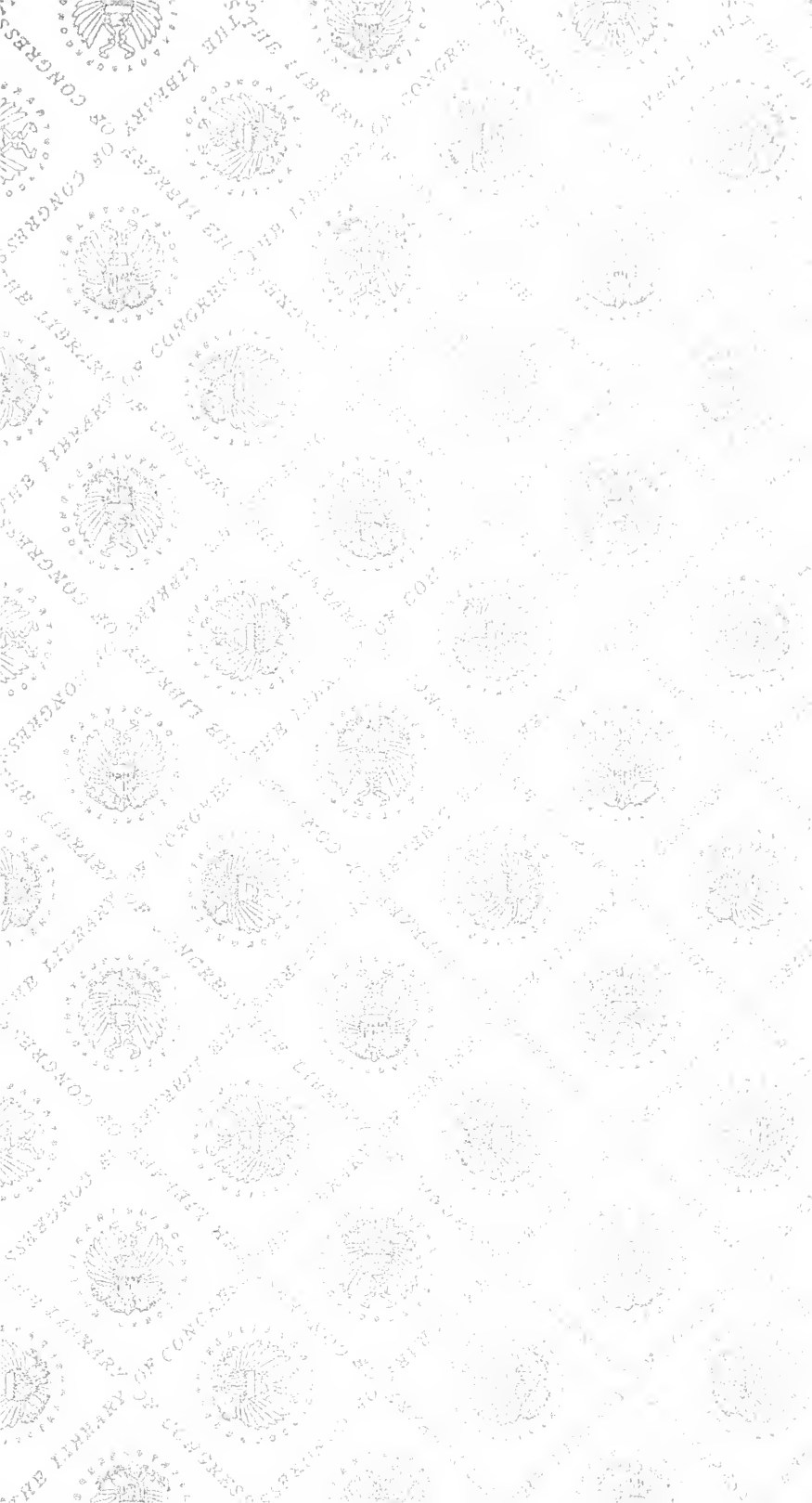


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Established in Righteousness.

A

DISCOURSE

TO THE

FIRST CHURCH AND SOCIETY

IN NEW HAVEN,

On a Day of Public Thanksgiving,

NOVEMBER 24th, 1859.

BY

LEONARD BACON,

PASTOR.

NEW HAVEN:
PECK, WHITE AND PECK.

PRINTED BY E. HAYES.

1859.

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NEW HAVEN, Nov. 25, 1859.

Rev. LEONARD BACON, D. D.,

Dear Sir—The undersigned having heard the Thanksgiving Sermon delivered by you in the Center Church, yesterday, and being impressed with its appropriateness and value, respectfully solicit a copy for publication, hoping that much good may be accomplished by the dissemination of the truths therein contained.

With sentiments of highest regard,

We are very, respectfully, &c.

LEONARD BRADLEY.	SIMEON HOADLEY.	JOHN ANKETELL.
E. T. FOOTE.	JOHN B. CARRINGTON.	THOMAS A. THACHER.
HERVEY SANFORD.	JAS. M. TOWNSEND.	C. S. LYMAN.
E. S. HUBBARD.	HENRY C. KINGSLEY.	L. J. SANFORD.
THOS. R. TROWBRIDGE.	ELI WHITNEY.	ABRAHAM SANFORD.
JUSTUS S. HOTCHKISS.	ALVAN WILCOX.	R. BAKEWELL.
HENRY WHITE.	JOSEPH BROWN.	H. B. SMITH.
ALFRED WALKER.	LUCIUS HOTCHKISS.	WALES SMITH.
HENRY PECK.	S. HAYES.	JOHN LANE.
JOHN ENGLISH.	B. W. STONE.	FORREST SHEPHERD.
ELI W. BLAKE.	GEORGE TREADWAY.	EZRA HOTCHKISS.
JAMES WINSHIP.	BENJ. NOYES.	ELISHA DICKERMAN.
STEPHEN BISHOP.	C. B. WHITTLESEY.	NEWELL C. HALL.
ARTHUR D. OSBORNE.	AMOS F. BARNES.	JAMES FORDHAM.
CHAS. ATWATER.	DENTER ALDEN.	LEONARD A. DAGGETT.
JOHN RITTER.	CHARLES ROBINSON.	CHARLES A. JUDSON.
J. C. RITTER.	LEONARD WINSHIP.	HENRY D. WHITE.
CHAS. THOMPSON.	ALEX. C. TWINING.	CHAS. H. OAKS.
B. SILLIMAN, JR.	B. SILLIMAN.	E. HAYES.
W. HILLHOUSE.	WM. L. KINGSLEY.	G. WHITING.
H. OLMSTEAD.	HORACE DAY.	S. MEAD.
JAMES DWIGHT.		

The subscribers cordially concur in requesting a copy of the Rev. Dr. BACON's Thanksgiving sermon for publication.

Nov. 25, 1859.

HENRY S. DAWSON.	L. G. CANNON.	ALFRED S. MONSON.
GEO. GABRIEL.	JONATHAN KNIGHT.	WM. B. HAYES.
B. L. HAMLEN.	E. C. READ.	TRUMAN FRENCH.
SEYMOUR BRADLEY.	E. H. TROWBRIDGE.	CHAS. DICKERMAN.
A. C. WILCOX.	D. R. LARNED.	S. A. BARROWS.
SAMUEL NOYES.	WILLIS BRISTOL.	J. MILLER.
CHAS. W. ALLEN.	GEO. D. ENGLISH.	NATHAN H. SANFORD.
H. HOTCHKISS.	STILES FRENCH.	D. L. DAGGETT.
T. B. ATWATER.	JAMES WALKER.	J. P. DICKERMAN.
WM. DICKERMAN.	S. DOLE.	SCOVIL HINMAN.
R. W. BRADLEY.	L. L. BISHOP.	D. S. BARNES.
CHAS. WINSHIP.		

NEW HAVEN, DEC. 12, 1859.

Messieurs. LEONARD BRADLEY, E. T. FOOTE, HERVEY SANFORD, and others :

Gentlemen—In complying with your kind request for the publication of the sermon preached on Thanksgiving day, I may be allowed to say that I have endeavored carefully to reproduce those parts of the discourse which were not previously committed to writing. I trust that the discourse as printed will be found identical in thought and effect, if not in every expression, with the discourse as spoken in your hearing.

Thanking you sincerely for the friendly regard implied in your desire to read, and to communicate to others, the thoughts which were addressed to you on that occasion,

I am, respectfully,

Your servant in the gospel,

LEONARD BACON.

DISCOURSE.

Isaiah liv ; 13, 14.—AND ALL THY CHILDREN SHALL BE TAUGHT OF THE LORD ; AND GREAT SHALL BE THE PEACE OF THY CHILDREN. IN RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALT THOU BE ESTABLISHED : AND THOU SHALT BE FAR FROM OPPRESSION, FOR THOU SHALT NOT FEAR ; AND FROM TERROR, FOR IT SHALL NOT COME NEAR THEE.

THE prophecy of this chapter is rightly interpreted, by all Christian expositors, as descriptive of God's mercies and benefits to his Church under the reign of the Messiah—in other words, to the spiritual and mystical Israel, the commonwealth in which Christ is King. But the imagery under which the safety and blessedness of the Church are represented to our conception, is of such a nature that it is at the same time descriptive of the prosperity to which the civil and secular commonwealth of Israel might attain by virtue of its relation to the God of Israel. The words of our text, in particular, describe with great propriety and force, the felicity, the stability, and the security of any well ordered and enlightened Christian State. In whatever commonwealth or country, the knowledge of God, of His law and government, and of the way to honor Him and to be at peace with Him, is generally diffused and practically accepted—in whatever country or commonwealth that prophetic description, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children," has become in some sense a reality—there also, and in the same degree, the other promises of the text are beautifully realized.

We keep this festival to-day as citizens of Connecticut. This public thanksgiving—this assembling of the people in their pla-

ces of worship to praise the God who fills the circle of the year with His goodness—is at the call not of our National or Federal Government, but at the call of our own Chief Magistrate, the chosen successor of those who have been chosen to the same office by the annual votes of the people, ever since our heroic fathers, two hundred and twenty years ago, laid the foundations of a free and Christian commonwealth here in the wilderness which they had chosen for their home. The subject matter of our public thankfulness to-day is not merely those benefits which we enjoy in common with all the people of this great Continental Union, but also those benefits, if there be any such, which we enjoy in distinction from the people of other States, and by the blessing of God on the patriotic foresight of our fathers. If we, in our compactly settled townships with the primitive democracy of their municipal governments—if we, in the widely diversified industry of our people, giving opportunity for every sort of talent to find occupation, and drawing wealth from the soil and the mine, from the land and the sea, from resources at home and resources abroad—if we, in the provision which has been made among us, not only for the education of the whole people and the general diffusion of useful knowledge, but also for the advancement and cultivation of those higher departments of knowledge which give ornament and glory to a State as well as riches—if we in the prosperity and strength of our religious institutions, in the growing harmony and mutual charity of our Protestant Christian bodies, and in the general prevalence of a sound religious influence over society—if we, in the equity of our laws and the fidelity with which they are executed—if we, in the liberty which is the legal birthright of every human being born upon our soil or coming among us from foreign lands—if we, in the general consciousness of safety with which our entire population lies down to sleep at night, and rises up to work by day—have any benefits superior to those which the providence of God has given to other States, or to the inhabitants in other regions of our common country—all this we may

remember to-day, not in pride as if we were therefore better than others, but in humble thankfulness to the Giver of all good, whose sovereign bounty has allotted to us so goodly a heritage.

Among these distinctive blessings, none are more worthy of devout commemoration to-day, than those which are comprehended in the fact that a knowledge of God, and a reverence for His law as supreme, are so widely diffused among our people, and have to so great an extent given shape and character to our institutions and our laws. We cannot indeed say, absolutely, that all our people are taught of God—we have reason to lament with shame the religious ignorance and the gross ungodliness of which we see so many manifestations within the boundaries of our privileged Commonwealth, but we may say that the “great peace,” the eminent prosperity, the general felicity of our people, is because, through all the generations of our history, the children of our fathers have been so generally taught of God, and because the knowledge of the Lord and a salutary deference to His law as paramount to every other law, have had, even to this day, so much effect upon the common sentiment of our people and thus upon our legislation and government as a State. Great as our deficiencies are in this respect—and that they are great none of us can venture to deny—the theory of our laws is, and their aim is, that every man shall render to his neighbor that which is just and equal; and by the favor of God, this is the prevalent sentiment and spirit of society among us. Our Constitution, indeed, as framed some forty years ago, excludes one class of men, for their complexion, from all participation in political power—just as it excludes all persons under twenty-one years of age, and all who have never paid a tax nor rendered any military service; but neither our Constitution nor our laws have ever confounded the distinction between that political power which in the most consummate democracy must needs be in the hands of comparatively few, and those civil rights which belong to all. Our laws, so far as they proceed from our own power as a State, are founded on the great Christian principle

that underlies and expounds the Divine commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"—the principle that one God has made of one blood all nations of men—the principle, in other words, that all men are created equal, that is, with an equal right to life, to liberty, and to the pursuit of happiness. They are founded on the Christian principle that civil society or government—however the *form* of it may be determined by circumstances and by the explicit will or the implicit acquiescence of the people—is God's institution for the benefit not of the strong, nor of the crafty, nor of the fortunate, nor of any superior or privileged class, but of all; that magistrates are therefore God's servants for good to all alike, being divinely invested with power for the punishment of evil doers and for the praise and protection of them that do well; and that all who come within the jurisdiction of the government have an equal right to its impartial protection. The theory of our laws is that the State has an equal interest in the perfect welfare of every human being that lives within its boundaries; and therefore their aim is that no child shall grow up on our soil in stolid ignorance, unable to read the laws that rule him and that guard his rights and the book of God that offers him a citizenship and an inheritance in heaven. The theory of our laws is that no man shall be deprived of any human right, except in punishment of crime whereof he himself, and not his supposed ancestor among the sons of Noah, shall have been judicially convicted. The theory of our laws is that every man, so long as he does not invade the rights of his neighbors, or imperil the welfare of the State, is to choose his employments for himself; to cultivate and exercise his faculties in his own way; to read what he will; to speak and publish what he believes; and to enjoy the certainty of legal protection in his industry and in his honest gains, in his person and in his family, in his religious faith and worship and in his home. All this results from the knowledge of God so generally diffused among our people, and from the influence of that knowledge upon public sentiment and thus upon our laws

and government; and it is just this—it is this equal freedom and protection for all—it is this unlimited scope for the free play of all human impulses, affections and sympathies in every mind—it is this that gives to the industry of our Commonwealth its intense and restless activity, its ever increasing diversity of occupations, its keen sagacity in every direction, its all-enriching productiveness. It is the activity of every human faculty set free to do its work under the prompting not of fear only, but of hope and love—it is the protection of impartial justice overshadowing alike the richest and the poorest, the strongest and the weakest—it is the wide diffusion of God's word revealed from heaven, the vital element alike of justice and of freedom for all—it is this which makes our rugged land so beautiful to us who dwell in it, and so venerable to the myriads who to-day, in other States and other lands, or on the sea, are looking back toward old Connecticut with filial love.

But let me turn your attention more distinctly to one particular aspect of God's beneficence towards us the people of this free Commonwealth. It is suggested, and in some measure illustrated by the text. "In righteousness shalt thou be established,"—that is, justice shall be thy stability and security. "Thou shalt be far from oppression"—far from depressing and crushing apprehensions—"for thou shalt not fear; and from terror for it shall not come nigh thee."* It has been the lot of other communities to live in the perpetual sense of danger—not only of danger from what may occur in the order of nature under the providence of God, danger from pestilence, from tempest and flood, from destructive drought or frost, from accidental conflagration, from earthquake or volcano—but danger from human violence more terrible than tempest or pestilence, more awful than earthquake or volcanic fire—danger from invading or insurgent enemies. But how complete and constant is our feeling of security! And what is the reason of this? At Paris,

* Perhaps a more just paraphrase would be, "Thou shalt be exempt from conquest and subjugation, for thou shalt have no fear; and from devastation, for it shall not come nigh thee."

at Venice, at Vienna, they live in a chronic fear of insurrection. At Naples, they live where a burning mountain stands ever in their sight, with its column of vapor condensing into a smoky cloud far up in the clear sky, and they walk over ancient cities buried deep in lava and volcanic ashes ; yet their chief terror is not so much the fiery flood that may at any hour begin to be poured out upon them from the mountain, as it is the eruption of human violence, the alarm of insurrection and of bloody revolution. In almost any city of France, one stave of the *Marseillaise*, carelessly whistled in the theater, would be as dangerous as a spark among barrels of gunpowder—one stanza of that wild war-song, in the streets, would be more terrible than any fire-alarm, for it would call out in a moment a frenzied and insurgent populace. Why is it that we have no such apprehension to depress and crush us with its perpetual weight? Simply because in God's good providence, we find our State, our laws and institutions, the whole structure of society among us, ESTABLISHED IN RIGHTEOUSNESS. Simply because, in God's good providence towards us, the history of Connecticut has been such that, to-day, impartial justice, established in our laws, guards with equal hand the rights of all. No race of conquerors lords it over us in military strength, provoking us to insurrection in the name of justice. No servile class beneath our feet is waiting for the hour of vengeance. Thank God for this—not boastfully but in humility! We have not achieved this safety for ourselves; He has wrought it for us.

To-day all this comes to our thoughts the more naturally, and the more impressively, for its connection with recent events which have filled this entire Union of States with a strange excitement. I need not repeat the full story of those events. A little company of men, only twenty-two in all, under the captaincy of one whom oppression had maddened, attempted to lead forth an exodus of slaves from their house of bondage in Virginia to a land of promise beyond the Niagara and the Lakes. So wild was the absurdity of the enterprise, that it may be

doubted whether anybody as yet has been able to comprehend it. But it would seem that the slaves, if they would accept the opportunity, were to be armed for self-defense; and then, if Pharaoh and his host should pursue them, the liberty of this new Israel was to be achieved in battle. In the prosecution of their plan, whatever it was, the twenty-two adventurers, by a bold and sudden stroke, seized an armory of the United States which ought to have been under military superintendence but was not; and in so doing, they obtained possession and command of a town containing two thousand inhabitants. An instantaneous alarm was spread not only through the neighborhood but through the State. No slaves dared to show themselves, or to express any sympathy with the invaders. Large bodies of militia hastened to the seat of war. United States' soldiers were sent in hot haste from the Metropolis. The end was what just everybody not quite bewildered knew it must be. After some desperate fighting, and some loss of life on both sides, the armory was recovered, and the surviving invaders, wounded and bleeding, were captured and delivered into the custody of the law. They have had their trial—they have been convicted of more crimes than were laid to the charge of Barabbas—they have been sentenced to death; and in just eight days from this hour, the Moses of that abortive exodus—a hero in the native elements of his character, and born of a heroic as well as saintly line—a peaceful and loyal citizen till his long meditation on “the oppressions that are done under the sun” had crazed his brain—and even in his monomania a man of faith and prayer—is to die upon the gallows. Meanwhile the alarm occasioned by the outbreak is not allayed, but is becoming daily more portentous; nor can we reasonably wonder if it grows more cruel, for nothing stimulates to cruelty like terror. At the same time, the excitement of various passions around us here, and in all parts of the Union, is growing, I will not say more perilous in its political relations, but more perilous to our moral sentiments and habits, and more perilous to the just influence of sound principle among us.

Let me say then frankly, as becomes the place in which I stand, what there is that seems wrong in the modes of thought and expression which are in some sense most natural to us, at this distance from the scene, and with our deep and reasonable abhorrence of slavery. Indeed it is for this purpose that I have adverted to the great and painful excitement of the hour.

1. It is wrong to deride, or to despise the great terror that seized upon the people of Virginia, and that is not yet allayed. We should not fail to remember that they had good reason to be terrified, and that nothing has yet occurred, or is likely to occur, that ought to quiet their fears. Nor should we forget that there are circumstances in which the bravest men may fear; for courage, in the honorable sense of the word, is a very different thing from foolhardiness. The condition in which the entire population of Virginia find themselves at this crisis, instead of being such as to justify derision or contempt, demands rather our sympathy and pity.

What is the terror there? What is it that makes them afraid? Many of us, I fear, misunderstand the matter—some through ignorance of the facts, others through inconsiderateness—just as the people of Virginia misunderstand our sentiments and feelings. The difficulty there—the terror—is not that individual masters are particularly afraid of their own slaves. Doubtless some masters have that terror, and have good reason for it; but in many instances, not to say generally, the relation between master and servant has something of domestic intimacy and mutual kindness in it. Strange as it may seem to the uninformed and unthinking, there is many a slave, no doubt, who would fight and die in defence of master and mistress more readily than in the assertion of his own freedom. Incredible as the statement may seem to those who accept a certain kind of anti-slavery declamation as unerring truth, many a slave there is who feels that, deeply as he is wronged, it is not his master that has wronged him. Do we not know that conspiracies among slaves for a sudden rising, and a simultaneous slaughter of the

whites, are almost invariably betrayed by some partner in the plot, whose affection for his master or his master's family, overpowers his fidelity to his comrades in the conspiracy, and who therefore is constrained to give some warning, or some hint, by which he hopes his master may be saved though others perish.

The great and constant peril in Virginia, and in every State similarly situated, is of another sort. It is that the State in its laws and social order is not established on the foundation of righteousness. It is not merely that there are two races of men mingled together on the same soil ; but it is that these two races are mingled together in a relation essentially hostile, the one an enslaved class, the other an enslaving class. It is that there is a class of human beings spread over the whole area of the State, whose human rights the law refuses to protect or recognize—a class whom the State regards and treats only as enemies, and who therefore are the enemies of the State, owing it no allegiance in law and incapable of treason against it. Nor is this all. They are not treated by the State as civilized enemies taken in war are treated ; they are treated as savage enemies ; and it is not too much to say that though born on the soil of Virginia, where their ancestors have lived and died for several generations, they *are* savages. Whatever has been done to civilize them, has been done by individual masters and mistresses for their own servants, and by the incidental and inevitable influence of contact with a superior race. The State, the dominant race which is the State, does nothing for their civilization—it makes no provision for their education—it sets before them none of the incentives, and voluntarily encompasses them with none of the influences, by which they might be progressively civilized—its avowed and settled policy is that they shall be savages and slaves forever. Such is the danger. It is just that danger which is inseparable from the presence of a hostile and essentially savage population diffused through the whole State ; quartered, as it were, in every dwell-

ing save the dwellings of the poor; large masses of them accumulated in certain districts, and hardly any district where they are not numerous enough to light a sudden conflagration, whenever they dare to do so either in hope or in despair; everywhere made continually conscious of their debased condition and their legal disabilities; everywhere their souls filled with the stifled but burning memory of ages of oppression. Why should not a people in such a condition be afraid? Why should they not tremble—all alike, the enslavers and the slaves—at every report or sign of insurrection? Why should not even the feeblest and most inconsiderate invasion of their borders, in the name of emancipation, send a tide of terror through the State? Not to be afraid in the continual presence of so great a danger, would be fool-hardiness rather than courage. Not to be startled at what may be the signal of insurrection, when insurrection means not merely civil war but servile and savage war, the outbreak of rapine and devastation, and the letting loose of universal rage to execute an indiscriminate slaughter—would be no indication of true manliness.

Some of us have heard the story of what happened at Richmond, a few days ago, while the late General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church was sitting there. The story is exaggerated perhaps in some points, yet it is neither improbable in itself nor discreditable to anybody's courage. We are told that the Convention was holding an evening session in one of the churches, thronged with a great assembly, and that the Governor of the State was there. A telegraphic message came to the Governor and he went out. Soon it began to be whispered what the message was, and that it brought the news of an insurrection at Harper's Ferry. The business of the meeting went on, notwithstanding the excitement, till suddenly the gas which lighted the building ceased to flow, the lights went out, and darkness fell upon the city. Think what an alarm that was, and how reasonable. A failure of that sort happens here sometimes, but nobody thinks of being alarmed; nobody thinks that per-

haps it is the signal for conflagration and massacre. If we should be affrighted at such an accident, we should deserve to be derided for our fear. Not so where there is a servile population everywhere present in the State, an ignorant and therefore savage class, a class inexorably deprived of human rights, and therefore implacably hostile to the commonwealth. There it is reasonable to be alarmed at every sign or hint of insurrection. Nor should we judge them harshly or contemptuously, if in their habitual and inevitable fear they infer, from our professed abhorrence of the injustice which is the basis of society among them, that we also are their enemies—ready to arm their slaves against them. Perhaps it is not possible for us to exorcise them of their prejudice; but let us not confirm their jealousy by laughing at their calamity and mocking at their terror.

2. It is wrong to blame the authorities or the people of Virginia for defending themselves against invasion, or for asserting their sovereignty as a State. The soil of Virginia was invaded by an armed force with hostile intentions. Had that force been commissioned and sent forth for the same purpose by some recognized foreign government, (that of France, for example, or of Great Britain) who would have blamed the authorities or the people of that State for repelling the invasion? Who would have blamed them for maintaining in arms the sovereignty of their government, or for making whatever demonstration (not contrary to the international law of the civilized world,) might be necessary for their security against future inroads from abroad? They would have said—and the universal mind of Christendom would have been with them—Our State is under the dominion of no foreign power, nor is it amenable to any foreign intervention; and those who come among us to put down our laws, and to establish on our soil, by force of arms, another government than ours, shall find none other than a bloody welcome. And if the people of that State would not be blameable for defending their own sovereignty on their own soil, and putting their laws in force against a British or a French invasion, how much less are

they to be blamed for defending their sovereignty and putting their laws in force against an armed invasion by private individuals acting on their own responsibility alone.

The first great principle of the moral code which regulates the intercourse of nations—the principle which guards the peace of the world, and without which there is no security for freedom anywhere—is that which forbids the intervention of any one sovereignty with the internal legislation or administration of another, save by the moral power of opinion and remonstrance. Whatever may be the right of a people to cast down by insurrection a government which they have found intolerable, and to establish another in its stead—whatever may be their duty in regard to the injustice incorporated with their laws and with the structure of their government—it is none the less their right, and none the less their duty, to defend themselves, their soil, their laws, and their sovereignty, as a commonwealth, against an armed and military invasion from whatever quarter. Unarmed intervention—intervention by moral influences that act on thought and opinion, and that reform the minds of men and nations—intervention by argument, by expostulation, by rebuke, in spoken or in written words, in picture or in song—intervention by the testimony of men who are willing to go to prison and to death for the truth of which God has made them witnesses—peaceable intervention by whatever peaceable methods—is a very different thing. Such was the intervention of the Apostles and early confessors of Christianity with the established polytheism of the Roman empire. Such was the intervention practiced by the men who, at the era of the Reformation assailed the dominant superstition, when they went from one country to another disseminating the prohibited truth at their own peril; filling the minds of men with new ideas; preaching where they could; talking where they could not preach; employing the capabilities of the newly invented art of printing; agitating by every peaceful method the great question of the age; and, if arrested, yielding a passive obedience to the exist-

ing powers, and going bravely to the dungeon, to the rack and to the stake. The violence that resists such intervention with established wrong, reacts against itself; for it provokes the censure and in time the indignation of the world. But an armed intervention whether of kings, or of uncrowned and uncommissioned adventurers, volunteering to adjust the internal government of a country not their own—an intervention that proposes to reform by violence, and to extend the area of freedom by invasion and conquest—justifies, before the tribunal of the world's opinion and of history, an armed resistance and an effectual suppression.

3. It is wrong to permit our admiration of the indisputably heroic qualities which distinguish the leader of that invasion, and our sympathy with the unselfishness of his motives, to blind or pervert our judgment in regard to the intrinsic unlawfulness of his attempt. I will not say anything to you in disparagement—and surely I need not say anything in honor—of that man's courage and cool firmness, which have extorted admiration from his enemies; of his whole-souled devotedness to what he considered to be his duty; of his cheerful readiness to suffer the loss of all things, not counting his life dear to himself in comparison with the cause which he had espoused; and of his manly and Christian sympathy with the oppressed, putting himself in their place and ready to die for them. There are few who have not read the letters which he has written from his prison, and which, though written to particular friends, have obtained an unintended publicity; and none can read them without feeling the grand simplicity of soul that breathes in them. How strikingly do they combine a childlike unaffectedness and unconsciousness with the calm dignity of a hero and the faith and self-sacrifice of a martyr! In our admiration and our sympathy, we are in danger of forgetting the contrast between the romantic heroism and Puritan godliness of the man, and the intrinsic wrong of the mad and fatal enterprise for which he is to die.

If we would guard our own souls' health, we must not forget what the error was into which he fell. What was that error? He assumed the right of making war against an existing and established government. After having been long employed in collecting arms and munitions of war, he began the execution of his plan by invading peaceful homes, seizing the property and persons of men over whom he had no authority, and shooting down those who resisted his proceedings. God had not made him a magistrate to administer justice between the oppressor and the oppressed, still less had God invested him with despotic authority to rule at his own discretion by military force; yet he dared to take into his hands the sword not of self-defence but of justice. His error was that in his love of justice, and in his pity for the wronged, he became an armed insurgent against a government which, even if you affirm that it is no better than the government of Nero, is nevertheless a government in fact—an "existing power"—and therefore, according to the Apostolic definition a "power ordained of God." Doubtless he acted from a high sense of duty. He verily thought that he ought to undertake a work which, at the first stages of its expected success, was sure to be attended with all the horrors of a deadly conflict between the enslavers and the slaves. But was he right in thinking so? Is it right for Don Quixote to go up and down in the world, delivering the oppressed and rectifying all wrongs, at his own discretion and with his own good sword? Plainly, there are some errors into which a sane man cannot fall without guilt; and this is one of them. If that brave old man, now waiting for his death with so sublime a cheerfulness, is indeed a sane man, his error, whatever it may avail before God who knows the depths of our infirmity, could not excuse him at the tribunal of any government on earth. For such an attempt as his there is no excuse but that of a mind which has lost its helm, and through the ascendancy of some illusion generated by disease, has become incapable of discerning things as they are. The hallucination under which he acted, and which had been growing upon

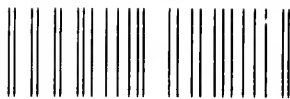
him for a score of years—the illusion which had possessed him so long, which had blended itself with all his thoughts of duty and of devotion, and which had gained strength from his struggles and his sufferings—the dream that God had commissioned him to be a liberating Moses and a conquering Joshua—is what relieves him from the intrinsic criminality of his attempt. Acting under an illusion that had mastered his reason and had subjected all his faculties to its control, he has exhibited, and I doubt not will exhibit till the tragedy shall end, just those traits of character which command the sympathy even of generous foes. But if, in our admiration of those personal qualities made so conspicuous, we forget for a moment that it is wrong for a citizen of one State to make an armed foray into the territory of another—wrong for a citizen, without authority other than that of his own sword, to seize the property of other men and to take their persons captive—wrong for him to kill those who dare resist in arms his armed invasion of their soil—our highest moral sentiments and instincts will be in danger. Under the influence of such sympathies, the glowing indignation which the sight of huge injustice wakens in every manly soul, may kindle the malign emotions into a lurid flame; and philanthropy itself, forgetting the precepts of Christ and his Apostles, may degenerate into chronic wrathfulness and hate. We need not cease to pity the enslaved, remembering them as if we shared their bondage; we need not cease to regard with a just abhorrence that great wrong which while it crushes them is reacting with so many retributive effects on the States that enslave them; but let us none the less be watchful against the temptation of the hour, and pray, “Deliver us from evil.”

It will help us against all the temptation of the hour, if we remember, in a humble and thankful spirit, that it is God, and no wisdom or goodness of our own, that has made our condition to differ so widely from the condition of those who dwell where society is not yet established in righteousness. God in his own wisdom has given to us this goodly heritage. He

spreads around our homes this constant safety. He has exempted us not only from the fears which hang in a perpetual cloud over regions fairer and sunnier, and far richer in the gifts of nature, than our own, but also from those temptations to maintain that wrong is right and to contradict and stifle the instinctive moral sense, which are so powerful where society itself is an organized injustice. Surely none but a base and thankless mind can fail to derive from such a thought as this a lesson of humility in respect to ourselves, and of forbearance and charitable judgment in respect to those whose condition is less privileged than ours. Surely a serious and reasonable mind cannot fail to derive from the thought that it is God who has thus distinguished us, a lesson not merely of thankfulness but of high resolve and earnest aspiration. With our experience of how blessed a thing it is for a State to be established in righteousness, shall we ever forget, for a moment, that our responsibilities—our duties to God, to our country, and to succeeding generations, are commensurate with our privileges? Let us stand like men, testifying to the world, in our thankful devotion to God, that there can be no peace to a commonwealth, no pledge of prosperity, like that which comes from the universal diffusion of knowledge and especially of the knowledge of God; and no stability like that which ensues when the State is ESTABLISHED IN RIGHTEOUSNESS.



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